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ARTHUR RANSOME : *A History of Story-Telling*.  
 London : T. C. and E. C. Jack ; New York :  
 F. A. Stokes & Co. 8vo., pp. 312 and Index.

This is a commendable venture into a field still too little cultivated in English. The development of college courses in the Novel has called out several good text-books, but there is no satisfactory work in English as yet upon the history of prose fiction for the general reader. Dunlop's work, even in its revised form, is inadequate, ill-arranged, and very dry. Mr. Ransome does not put forward his book as a history of fiction, but it may well help make a market for a more comprehensive and thorough work. It conveys, apparently, his series of shilling selections from *The World's Story-Tellers*, published by the Messrs. Jack, and seeks merely to give a readable sketch of some of the important aspects of prose fiction, English and French, from the Renaissance to the present day. It is confessedly fragmentary, giving little attention to the realistic branch of the Novel, and it is more than whimsical in the inclusion of the *Roman de la Rose* and the tales of Chaucer among its topics, and the exclusion of *Amadis of Gaul* and other prose romances of chivalry, and of the whole dynasty of seventeenth century French Heroic Romances. But it shows a sympathetic though uneven acquaintance with the earlier periods, and an intelligent familiarity with the nineteenth century Romanticists. Part I, which discusses in chapters of about a dozen pages each *The Roman de la Rose*, *Chaucer and Boccaccio*, *The Rogue Novel*, *The Elizabethans*, *The Pastoral*, *Cervantes*, the essay-fictions of the *Spectator*, and the English realists of the eighteenth century, shows deft selection of matter and suggestive presentation. These sketchy chapters should make the reader curious to know more of the fiction of the early Renaissance, interesting, in spite of its weakness of form, in so many ways. It must be admitted that Mr. Ransome's statements are sometimes inaccurate. Sidney's *Arcadia* is represented (p. 85) as lacking in vigor and robustness. Swinburne's description of the work of Mrs. Aphra Behn as "weltering sewerage" is repeated with approval (pp. 71 and 139), though as applied to her novels the phrase is quite incorrect. Fielding and Smollett

are bracketed together, casually, with strange disregard of perspective (p. 162), as having "failed as dramatists." The estimates, moreover, of several of the leading figures of earlier fiction, Fielding, for example, Defoe, Le Sage, Cervantes, and Sidney, are scarcely adequate ; the backgrounds are good, but the main points do not stand out sufficiently. Part II, which deals with Scott and a few minor English Romanticists, with the two Americans, Hawthorne and Poe, and with French writers from Chateaubriand—who for some reason is included—to De Maupassant, is much better, — more correct in view and better written. Occasional inept or crudely expressed statements like the attribution to Hawthorne of "provincial pedantry" (p. 264), or the assertion (p. 188) that "Before the writing of the Waverley Novels, Romanticism in English narrative had shown itself but a stuttering and one-legged abortion, remarkable only for its extravagance," are easily outweighed by the excellent chapters on Balzac, Gautier, Mérimée, and the note on De Maupassant. In these chapters, as, indeed, throughout the book, Mr. Ransome has caught much of the vivacity, the graphic power, of the French critics of fiction, whom he seems to be imitating. It is to be regretted that he has not always attained the French discretion of phrase. The numerous portrait-sketches by J. Gavin, reinforcing ingeniously the author's estimates of his Story-Tellers, add much to the interest of the book.

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ROMAN WOERNER : *Henrik Ibsen*. Zweiter Band.  
 München, 1910. 8vo., v + 384 pp.

This second volume of Woerner's *Ibsen*, like the first which appeared in 1900, happily combines in the historical method of literary criticism with the purely æsthetic. After acquainting us with the necessary facts in connection with the inception and development of each drama, the mood in which it was conceived—as far as such a mood can be reconstructed from letters, speeches, reminiscences, and other sources,